(c) The Ministry of Environment & Forests have already requested the State Governments to reconstitute the respective State Pollution Control Boards with greater scientific input, in order to make them more effective. The State Boards are also being strengthened through financial and technical assistance from the Central Government, for greater effectiveness.

Ecomark Label for Products

836. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the object behind issuing the 'Ecomark label' for products ;

(b) the criteria for issuing such labels ; and

(c) the response of the producers so far ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) The objective behind issuing the 'Ecomark label' is to encourage the manufacture, use and disposal of products in a way that significantly reduces the harm that would otherwise be caused to the environment. Such "Environment Friendly" products will carry an 'Ecomark' label.

(b) The parameters to be considered while determining the criteria for issuing an 'Ecomark' are :—

(i) Production process including source of raw material ;

(ii) Case of natural resources ;

(iii) Likely impact on the environment ;

(iv) Energy Conservation in the production of the product ;

(v) Disposal of the product and it's container ;

(vi) Effect and extent of waste arising from the production process ;

(vii) Utilisation of waste and recycled materials ;

(viii) Suitability for recycling or packaging ; and

(ix) Biodegradability.

(c) The response of the producers has been good. Representatives of industrial associations and non-Governmental organisations are associated with the deliberations of the Technical Committees and the Steering Committee of the scheme. Comments on the draft criteria notified in specific cases, have also been received from the manufacturers.

Destruction of Rhino Horns in Assam

837. DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report which appeared in the PIONEER dated March 23, 1992, to the effect that five hundred and odd pieces of Rhino-horn stored in Assam are likely to be burnt down soon ;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto, especially for preventing the loss of the scarce commodity and poaching of the rare single-horned Rhinos ; and

(c) whether the population of the Rhinos has been dwindling fast ; if so, the population of Rhinos as on 1st January, 1990, 1991 and 1992 and the latest figures ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Internal as well as international trade in Rhino horns is banned. There is, therefore, no legal way for disposal of Rhino horns except by way of their destruction. However, Central Government have not received any advice from the Government of Assam that they plan to burn their stocks of Rhino-horns. To check poaching of Rhinos, assistance is provided to the States to develop anti-poaching capabilities in Rhino habitats. Besides, penalties have been made stiffer under the